



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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POLYSTICHUM SCOPULINUM **MOUNTAIN HOLLY-FERN**

Mountain Holly-fern has evergreen fronds that are 10-40 cm long, and clustered on a short, stout, scaly rhizome. The blades are made up of 20-40 primary pinnae on each side of the rachis. The primary pinnae are 1.5-3.2 mm long, and pinnately lobed with large basal lobes. Above the basal lobes, the pinnae are 1/3 to 1/2 as wide as long, and the lobes become progressively more shallow-cut and tooth-like. The lobes or teeth are inconspicuously sharp-tipped, and the apical tooth is larger than those nearest it. Circular clusters of sporangia borne on the undersides of the middle and upper pinnae are covered by indusia. Producing spores in June; evergreen and identifiable in all seasons.

POLYSTICHUM SCOPULINUM is most similar to *P. KRUCKENBERGII*, both distinguished from other Montana holly-ferns by having pinnae with large basal lobes. The latter differs in having shorter pinnae mostly 0.5-1.5 mm long that are 12 to as wide as long, with lobes or teeth that end in minute tips, and the apical tooth is not much larger than those nearest it.